R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 020 275 24 UD 005 793

VOTING BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL DESEGREGATION, A STUDY OF SOUTHERN NEGROES.

BY- KRYSTALL, ERIC R. AND OTHERS
TUSKEGEE INST., ALA., DEPT. OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RES.

REPORT NUMBER BR-6-8923 PUB DATE MAR 67
CONTRACT OEC-2-6-068923-1886
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$1.92 46P.

DESCRIPTORS- *VOTING, *SCHOOL INTEGRATION, *NEGROES, *NEGRO ATTITUDES, RESEARCH PROJECTS, INTERVIEWS, ELECTIONS, FREE CHOICE TRANSFER PROGRAMS, PARENT ATTITUDES, VOTER REGISTRATION, VOTING RIGHTS, MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, TUSKEGEE AREA STUDY

THIS INTERIM REPORT PRESENTS THE FINDINGS OF A STUDY OF NEGRO VOTING AND NEGRO ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL DESEGREGATION. DATA WERE OBTAINED IN INTERVIEWS WITH 282 MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, NEGRO RESPONDENTS. WITHIN THE SAMPLE, 228 WERE REGISTERED VOTERS, OF WHOM 24 PERCENT REGISTERED AFTER THE DATE OF THE LOCAL ENFORCEMENT OF THE 1965 VOTING RIGHTS BILL. THE SAMPLE WAS QUESTIONED ABOUT THEIR VOTING BEHAVIOR IN SIX DIFFERENT LOCAL AND STATEWIDE ELECTIONS IN WHICH THEY MIGHT HAVE VOTED. WHEN NEGROES WERE ASKED ABOUT THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD THE FREE-CHOICE SCHOOL DESEGREGATION SYSTEM IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, IT BECAME APPARENT THAT THE ISSUE WAS NOT OF IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO PARENTS. MANY OF THEM DID NOT FEEL THEY REALLY HAD AN OPTION. MOREOVER, 96 PERCENT OF THE PARENTS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE SCHOOLS THEIR CHILDREN WERE CURRENTLY ATTENDING AND DID NOT HAVE ANY STRONG MOTIVATION TO TRANSFER THEM TO A WHITE SCHOOL. IT IS FELT THAT A GROUP WHICH HAS BEEN DENIED A ROLE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN SO MANY AREAS DOES NOT PERCEIVE FREE CHOICE AS A REALITY. (NH)

IL 6-893
.T74

ED 020275

Voting Behavior And Attitudes Toward School Desegregation:

A Study of Southern Negroes

Eric R. Krystall
Mark A. Chesler
Agatha E. White

UD 005 715

Tuskegee Area Study

Department of
Social Science Research

Tuskegee Institute

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

VOTING BEHAVIOR AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SCHOOL DESEGREGATION: A STUDY OF SOUTHERN NEGROES

Eric R. Krystall
Department of Social Science Research
Tuskegee Institute

Mark A. Chesler
Center for Research on the Utilization of Scientific Knowledge
University of Michigan

Agatha E. White
Department of Social Science Research
Tuskegee Institute

UD 005 793

March 1967

The research reported here was performed pursuant to OEC-2-5-065123-1186 Contract #6-3923, U. S. Office of Education. Points of view or interpretations stated do not necessarily reflect on anyone but the authors.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
List of Tables		iii
Acknowledgments		iv
Students Who Participated in the 1965/6 Tuskegee Area Study		vi
CHAPTER		
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Background of the Study	2
	The Sample	3
II	NEGRO REGISTRATION AND VOTING BEHAVIOR	6
III	EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES AND PERSPECTIVES	25
	General Attitudes Toward Education	29
	Informing Parents About the Opportunity for Desegregation	30
	Attitudes Toward Desegregation	33
	Some General Results	37
APPENDIX A -- A Study of Family and Community Life		41

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Time of Voter Registration	7
2	Registration and Time of Registration Related to Employment Status	8
3	Time of Registration and Racial Views	9
4	Sources of Information about Elections and Candidates	10
5	Elections Participated In	11
6	Reasons for the Vote for Flowers	13
7	Reasons for Not Voting	14
8	Recommendations for Gubernatorial Candidates	16
9	Reasons for Gubernatorial Vote	18
10	Time of Registration and Decision to Vote for Governor	19
11	Reason for Voting Difficulties	20
12	Reasons for Election for Negro Sheriff	21
13	Problems of a Negro Sheriff	23
14	Reasons for Negro Vote Participation	23
15	Additional Measures for Negro Voter Participation	24
16	Distribution of Students in Schools	28
17	Sources of Information about Free Choice Options	32
18	Advantages and Disadvantages of Going to A White School	35
19	Time When Parents Will Send Their Children to A White School	37
20	Voting Behavior Related to Desegregation Plans	39

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the first of a series of monographs and articles which will report some of the findings of the Tuskegee Area Study. In 1964, Tuskegee Institute and the University of Michigan entered into a relationship aimed at strengthening the research and teaching facilities of both institutions. Within the overall relationship between the institutions, the Department of Social Science Research at Tuskegee Institute and the Center for Research on Conflict Resolution established close ties, which resulted in the creation at Tuskegee Institute of the Tuskegee Area Study, a research and training program for undergraduate majors in the social sciences.

The authors are deeply indebted to Mr. William Barth of Michigan's Center for Research on Conflict Resolution, who helped to establish the relationship. Dr. Paul Puryear, who was Director of the Department of Social Science Research at Tuskegee contributed to the success of this venture and was a co-director of this project. We wish to thank him for providing the stimulating climate in which this study was formulated. The students in Sociology 300 and 301, who are listed separately, were the planners, designers, interviewers and analysts of the study; to them goes the credit for nurturing the study and seeing it through its first year. Those who follow are in their debt.

We also wish to thank Dr. Wilmoth Carter, for invaluable help and encouragement, Mr. MacDawson Burton, Jr., Mr. James Reid, Miss Annie Fryer and Mrs. Abigail Krystall, who also gave extensive assistance to

the study. We are grateful to the Fels Foundation for providing the initial support for the Tuskegee Area Study and to Dr. David Seely and the U. S. Office of Education for making it possible to reinterview our respondents.

Finally, we wish to express our gratitude to the many residents of Montgomery who were included in our sample and so willingly cooperated with our interviewers through our successive interviews.

STUDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE 1965/6 TUSKEGEE AREA STUDY

Gloria B. Abernathy

Eugene Adams

Jacqueline E. Banks

Patricia L. Banks

Robert Benham

Douglas R. Brown

Marvin M. Burns

Willie W. Carr

Billie L. Carter

David Coleman

Doris N. Cooper

George E. Davis

Mary A. Head

Australia A. Hoover

James O. Johnson

Ruffer Johnson

Clara Jones

Gwendolyn D. Lee

Joe Ann Long

Deborah C. Lott

Curtis McCoy II

Danzel L. Miller

James Monroe

Shirley A. Moore

Winston L. Myers

Carolyn L. Neely

Eleanor Patrick

Ida J. Postell

Vivian Ray

Johnnie D. Rivers

Cassandra A. Samuel

Mamie Shields

Bobbie Stevenson

Dorothy J. Strickland

Mildred Thomas

Agatha E. White

Kaye S. Wright

Doris L. F. Wrighten

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The years since 1954 have been ones of intense activity in the field of civil rights. The period was ushered in by the Supreme Court decision on school desegregation and culminated in 1965 with Congressional passage of the Public Accommodations and the Voting Rights Bills. Legal action has been followed by increasing activity by concerned citizens and organizations to acquire rights guaranteed by the courts and the Constitution in all institutional areas.

It is generally recognized that the first major concerted action by Negro citizens, a bus boycott, was taken in Montgomery, Alabama, in late 1956. Outrage was expressed at the constant indignities to which Negroes were subjected, particularly segregated buses. This bus boycott was successfully maintained over a period of months until victory in the form of a court order which outlawed discrimination in public transportation was achieved and new city rules were effected. Under the fledgling leadership of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., total mobilization of the community was sustained in the face of threats of violence and reprisals.

This report looks at the Negro community of Montgomery one decade later and will deal with community attitudes and behavior regarding political and educational procedures and institutions.

Background of the Study

Montgomery is the capital of Alabama. In 1960 the population was 154,393, of which 35.3 per cent was non-white. The Negro population is in a poorer position relative to the white population on almost any socio-economic or demographic variable by which status may be measured. Using family income as an example, the 1960 U. S. Census shows that 41.4 per cent of all Negro families earned less than $2,000 a year as against 6.2 per cent of the white families. A more recent analysis[1] indicates that 80 per cent of the Negro families have combined incomes of less than $4,000 per year, and only 3 per cent have incomes above $8,000 per year. At the time of the boycott, 63 per cent of the women were domestics and 43 per cent of the Negro men were laborers or domestic workers. At that time only 31 per cent of the Negro families had flush toilets in their homes.[2] In 1960, the median number of school years completed was 6.9. At the time of this survey the socio-economic position of the community had not improved in any noticeable way. The reasons for this relative economic and social deprivation are well known and have often been documented.

The Negro community was for generations excluded from the political process. Except for the brief struggle to desegregate the buses it was a community that was acted upon rather than a community that acted. This exclusion of the Negro community in Montgomery was no different

---

[1] Neighborhood Analysis for Montgomery, Alabama, January 1965, Urban Consultants Associates, Montgomery, p. 13.

[2] Martin Luther King, Jr., Stride Toward Freedom (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), pp. 27-28.

from that of other cities throughout the South. It was to change this pattern, to increase voter participation and to hasten school desegregation that the civil rights bills of 1965 were introduced and passed. The cessation of literacy requirements and the assignment of federal registrars was designed to add a considerable number of Negro voters to the rolls.

Our examination of political behavior will specifically deal with voting patterns between those persons who were newly registered and those who had registered prior to 1965. The former had no opportunity to exercise their vote before April 1966; yet, later that year they were given six opportunities to vote in various state and local elections within a six-month period.

In this same period of time, federal courts handed down an order that all children in Montgomery should be allowed to choose which school they wished to attend. This order was explicitly designed to maximize freedom of choice in school assignment and to promote Negro desegregation of formerly white schools. During the 1965-1966 school year, however, the public schools in Montgomery still remained largely segregated. About twelve Negro students were attending white schools. Some of the reasons underlying this continued pattern of segregation will be explored.

The Sample

In January 1966, students enrolled in a course in Research Methods in the Social Sciences at Tuskegee Institute designed and executed a study of Negro family and community life at Montgomery, Alabama. A sample of 493 adults in the Montgomery area was interviewed and data was obtained on a number of topics. The sample was drawn from the Montgomery

City Directory of 1965. Since Negroes constituted approximately 30 per cent of the total Montgomery population, we could not guarantee a large Negro sample by randomly sampling the city. Therefore, a proportionately larger sample was taken from those city blocks in which the Negro population comprised 90 per cent or more of the total residences.[1] The almost perfect pattern of segregation in Montgomery made this task of selection relatively easy--in only one or two cases was an address selected that of a white family.

It was decided to reinterview these respondents twice to obtain more detailed information on two related areas of behavior: attitudes toward education and voting behavior. One reinterview took place after a series of primary elections for state and local offices and the election of a city commissioner in June and July, 1966; and a second reinterview was conducted after the state and local elections in November 1966.

In the first reinterview, 366 of the original 493 respondents were contacted. A number of the respondents had died, left the state, or moved in the interim and proved difficult to trace. Neither funds nor personnel were available to engage in a costly tracing operation. In November, 282 of these 366 respondents were again reinterviewed. Our major findings will thus relate to the 282 respondents who were interviewed three times in all. Occasionally, findings will be given for either the 366 respondents who were interviewed twice or the original 498. Use of the original or second group will be noted explicitly.

---

[1] U. S. Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Housing: 1960, Vol. III, City Blocks, Series HC(3), No. 6. (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961), Table 2.

This document should be considered as an interim report of our study; we fully plan to continue the analysis. A subsequent and more detailed analysis will compare the three sets of respondents on several demographic and behavioral items and seek to detail what biases may exist in the later samples.

CHAPTER II

NEGRO REGISTRATION AND VOTING BEHAVIOR

One of the major foci of civil rights activity and all programs concerned with racial progress in this nation has been the extension of the duties and rights of political participation to all citizens. In particular, much attention has been directed to the attempt to extend full voting rights and to encourage participation in elections to Southern Negroes. In this chapter, we will briefly examine some of the data relevant to voter registration and voting patterns among the Negro adults in our sample.

Of the total population of 282 adults in our study, 223 (31 per cent) were registered voters as of November, 1966. Of these 223 registered voters, over 24 per cent registered after September 1965, the date of local enforcement of the 1965 Voting Rights Bill. Data reflecting the time of voter registration of our sample are presented in Table 1.

The time of registration is significant because we wish to examine the potential impact of the Voting Rights Bill and the utilization of federal registrars in the South upon Negro voting patterns. The Voting Rights Bill, passed on August 6, 1965, clearly was aimed at the seven Southern states of Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, Virginia and North Carolina. It ruled out a variety of voter qualification tests, including literacy tests and some poll taxes, and authorized

the use of Federal agents to help register voters. There is substantial documentation available to support the government's contention that literacy tests and other voter qualification examinations have been unfairly administered and have been one means by which local politicians have been able to prevent qualified Negroes from entering the voting rolls.

Table 1

Time of Voter Registration

	Number	Per Cent
When did you register to vote?		
1966	24	11
October 1965 - December 1965	30	13
January 1965 - September 1965	42	18
1960 - 1964	76	33
Before 1960	46	20
Don't Know	10	4
	228	99

On October 10, 1965, the government, convinced that local registration officials were not performing their duties conscientiously, ordered Federal registrars to Montgomery, Alabama. They began taking voter registration applications on October 15. With these new Federal procedures and supports, the possibility of actually being able to vote now became real enough for Montgomery Negroes to begin to see the ballot as

a potential avenue for the expression of protests and community desires.

The data indicate that occupational status is related to the registration status and time of registration of Montgomery Negroes. People with higher occupational status registered earlier than those people in lower status occupations ($X^2 = 15.80$; $p. < .001$). Table 2 demonstrates the significant relationship between employment or occupational status and registration or time of registration.

Table 2

Registration and Time of Registration Related to Employment Status

Status	Registered before 1965 (N=121)	Registered after 1965 (N=104)	Not Registered (N=53)
Professionals, managers sales and operatives (N=93)	62%	29%	9%
Service workers, laborers (N=63)	31%	54%	15%
Unemployed (N=117)	36%	34%	30%
		$X^2 = 32.26$	$p. < .01$

The people who registered later also appear to be slightly more militant in the way they view racial issues. We asked respondents whether they agreed or disagreed that Negroes who were denied first class citizenship should not go to fight abroad, and whether they agreed or disagreed with Black Power. Although the latter is not statistically significant,

in both cases the later registrants expressed a more militant position. These data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Time of Registration and Racial Views

Racial Views		Registered Before 1965 (N=114)	Registered After 1965 (N=96)
Negroes who are denied first class citizenship here in the U.S. should not go and fight for the U.S. in some foreign country.	Agree (N=115)	43%	52%
	Disagree (N=97)	62%	38%
		$X^2 = 4.11$ p. $< .05$	
		(N=75)	(N=43)
How do you feel about Black Power?	For it (N=60)	58%	42%
	Against it (N=53)	69%	31%
		$X^2 = 1.41$ NS	

Perhaps these data reflect the fact that later registrants were being politically socialized in a new era, at a time when Negro power was seriously considered, and at a time when these issues mobilized people to become registered. On the other hand, it may also reflect a potential association between occupational status and political ideology. A fuller understanding of these relations requires more intensive analysis of these and other variables, a task which will be completed in the near future.

The importance of Negro voting in Alabama elections was discussed at meetings in churches, in newspaper articles, on the radio and on television. Pastors, priests, deacons, community leaders, teachers, and writers all encouraged, beseeched, and admonished Negroes to register and then vote. Candidates recognized the growing Negro electorate and some sought their vote through handbills, letters, telephone calls and personal visits. Table 4 reports the number of people in our population who heard about or talked about candidates and the election through a variety of these media and associations.

Table 4

Sources of Information About Elections and Candidates

Source	Yes	No
Attended meetings to discuss qualifications of candidates	8%	92%
Discussed at church	54%	46%
Received handbills from candidates	28%	72%
Read newspaper articles about the elections	43%	57%
Discussions with family or friends	32%	68%

Local Negro leaders exerted much energy in encouraging Negroes to vote. We asked our respondents, "Who do you think is the Negro in Montgomery that has the most influence on Negro voters?" Of those who responded to this question, fully 65 per cent felt that Mr. Rufus Lewis, a prominent

mortician and businessman in the Negro community, was the most influential Negro leader.

Between the end of April 1965 and November 1966, there were six different elections in which our respondents might have voted: (1) a Democratic party primary for city commissioner; (2) a Democratic primary for state officers; (3) a run-off Democratic primary for local office; (4) the final election for city commissioner and a city vote regarding fluoridation of the local water supply; (5) the state primary run-off; and (6) the statewide elections of November 1965.

Approximately 10 per cent of the registered voters in this sample voted in all six elections, and a total of 52 per cent voted in all three state level elections. Eighty-nine per cent of the population voted in at least one election. These data are reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Elections Participated In

	Number	Per Cent
Which elections did you vote in?		
All six	22	10
All state and some city	74	32
All state	23	10
Some state	34	15
Some state and some city	48	21
Some city	2	1
Never voted	25	11
	228	100

The first election was a Democratic party primary for city commissioner. Only about 27 per cent of the registered voters in the sample voted in that election. Some said they were just not interested in this election; others were working, or were visiting out of town; and some were sick.

In the second election--the Democratic primary for state and some local offices--the percentage of registered voters voting was 73.6 per cent, a sizeable increase in participation over that of the city primary. Of the people voting in the Democratic primary, 90 per cent cast their ballot for Richmond Flowers as governor. We asked our respondents why they voted for Flowers. Most respondents reported that he spoke out for the Negroes and seemed to suggest that he would do more for Negroes. Others felt that he was better qualified, that he could do the job, or that they just didn't like anybody else in particular. But it was very clear, and certainly was recorded as such in the Alabama press, that Richmond Flowers was perhaps the only gubernatorial candidate who openly wooed the Negro vote, who went out of his way to campaign in Negro districts, and who suggested that the state should revise its proceedings in dealing with Negroes, and in a number of ways courted the very response that Montgomery Negroes made. Table 6 reports the various reasons Montgomery Negroes voted for Flowers in this primary.

The vote for Flowers may be seen as an unambiguous rejection of the argument that Negro voters will split when it comes to supporting candidates who promise to help them. It may well be that some candidates who claim to speak for the Negro community do so very indistinctly and thus are not rewarded.

Table 6

Reasons for the Vote for Flowers

	Number	Per Cent
Leader or group said to	29	13
Liked him generally	33	16
Spoke out for Negroes	98	42
Better qualified	64	28
N A	3	1
	232	100

The third election in Montgomery was the run-off election for the Democratic party primary for city commissioner; the two candidates were Kaminsky and Evans. Only about 33 per cent of the registered voters went to the polls in this election, and of these, some could not remember the names of the persons running or who they voted for. Interest and participation was quite low in the next two elections. Only 3 per cent of the registered Negro voters in our sample voted in the election of a city comissioner. When we asked respondents why they did not vote in this city election, the predominant reasons again had to do with lack of interest, the fact that the respondent was working at the time, or was ill or otherwise unable to get to the polls. These reasons are recorded in Table 7.

Table 7

Reasons for Not Voting

	Number	Per Cent
Why didn't you vote in the election for city commissioner?		
Wasn't interested	33	39
Working	63	30
Illness	29	14
Didn't like either candidate	6	3
Told not to	7	3
No answer, don't know	22	10
	209	99

In the fifth election only 17 per cent voted on the motion concerning the fluoridation of water. Negroes were fairly well divided on this issue, about half voting for and half voting against fluoridation.

The low degree of participation in local elections could be attributed to several factors. In the first place, press coverage was given to the Democratic party primary by local and national news media and much attention was focused on getting out the vote for this primary that had regional and national implications. Certainly Negroes were much more interested in and committed to, getting rid of Wallace than the more immediate and less dramatic concerns of city government. Although many places of work closed down for the state Democratic primary, industries

and services did not permit people to be let off from work for city commission primaries, run-offs and elections. Finally, it must be realized Negroes in Montgomery feel that voting still contains an elemental risk, and without very strong motivation and community support to go to the polls, Negroes are quite likely to substitute apathy and disinterest for political participation.

The sixth and final election in 1965 was the November general election for state and local offices. Prior to the election, a number of social and political organizations in Montgomery actively campaigned for one or another candidate. Among these organizations that actively encouraged Negroes to vote were the NAACP, the Montgomery Improvement Association and the Alabama Democratic Conference. We asked our respondents' whether they thought these organizations should have recommended voting for Lurleen Wallace, James Martin or Carl Robinson for Governor, or not made any recommendation at all. The largest number of respondents who felt any recommendation should have been made, said that support should have been given to Wallace rather than to Martin or Robinson. One important reason given was that Wallace's attempts to hurt Negro organizations and activities have actually helped. However, 40 per cent of the sample said that these organizations should not have made any recommendations at all primarily because, they felt there really were no reasonable choices for Negroes to make. Another important reason given was that every person should vote for himself, and it would be inappropriate to let the Southern whites think that the Negro had been told how to vote. Table 3 presents the various recommendations our respondents felt should have been made.

Table 3

Recommendations for Gubernatorial Candidates

	Number	Per Cent
What recommendations should have been made, and why?		
Recommend Wallace	59	21
His efforts to hurt Negroes have helped	23	8
As good as the others	29	10
He is predictable	7	3
Recommend Martin	15	6
Fair man for Negroes	7	3
Reduce taxes	8	3
Recommend Robinson	15	6
Best of three evils	15	6
No recommendation	116	41
None were for Negroes	42	14
Let every man decide for himself	68	24
Other	6	3
N A	75	27
	280	101

Fifty-nine per cent of the voters in our registered sample voted in this statewide election, again pointing out the high degree of participation in state-level as opposed to local-level politics. However, it is clear that the vote in this election was less than in the Democratic party primary, and we queried the reasons for this. The most dramatic response, over and above the continued lack of interest, illness and working, was that a substantial portion of our population (27 per cent

of those not voting) no longer saw themselves as having a realistic choice. Some were disenchanted with the last election, some no longer knew who to vote for, some felt that all the candidates were unqualified. Republican candidate Martin expounded a point of view regarding national and state policies very similar to Democratic candidate Wallace. Although Wallace continued to castigate the Democratic party's national machinery, Martin did the same. Martin campaigned primarily on the position that he, rather than Wallace, would be able to do a better job of resisting national political pressures, because he was not a Democrat but a Republican. For Montgomery Negroes concerned with the issues of racial separation in the schools, racial justice in their courts, the building of highways, sewers in their neighborhoods and adequate police protection, the choice between Martin and Wallace was no choice at all. In the words of some conservative Republicans regarding the election of 1960, it was "not a choice, but an echo."

Of those who did vote in this election, 56 per cent cast their ballots for Wallace, 22 per cent voted for Martin, and 14 per cent voted for Independent-Democrat Robinson. We asked the respondents why they voted for the candidate of their choice. All those who voted for Martin explained their reasons either in terms of negative reactions to Wallace or the possibility of having a woman in the governor's chair. The predominant reaction of those who voted for Wallace was party loyalty; they didn't want a Republican and wanted to continue to vote for a Democratic ticket. Almost a third of the Wallace voters gave as their reason that Negroes have accomplished much through her husband's mistakes.

These voters evidently felt that a continuation of the Wallace regime would result in more public notoriety for Alabama and greater Federal support for the efforts of Alabama Negroes, and would eventually lead to greater progress. These data regarding the reasons for voting for Martin, Wallace and Robinson are presented in Table 9.

Table 9

Reasons for Gubernatorial Vote

		Per Cent
Why did you vote for _____ for Governor?		
Wallace	56%	
Wanted a Democrat		29%
Can accomplish much through his mistakes		16%
Best Governor		8%
Influenced by someone		3%
Martin	22%	
Keep Wallace out		11%
Didn't want a woman		11%
Robinson	14%	
For the Negro		14%
Don't know	3%	

Fourteen per cent of those voting did vote for the Independent candidate. After the election, however, we asked our respondents if they would now support a third party candidate who would give Negroes a choice between Wallace and Martin. Over 75 per cent of the respondents said

that they would support such an Independent candidate, despite strong party ties.

The findings indicate that time of registration was associated with the eventual decision to vote. Table 10 indicates that people who registered earlier, before 1965, were more likely to vote in the November gubernatorial election than those who registered during 1965.

Table 10

Time of Registration and Decision to Vote for Governor

Voter Participation	Registered Before 1965	Registered After 1965	
Voted (n=134)	60%	40%	100%
Not voted (N=94)	45%	55%	100%
	$X^2 = 5.25$	p. .05	

Unfortunately, this table does not indicate why later registrants were less likely to vote. Was it because they were less interested and more apathetic, or because they were angry and alienated by the gubernatorial choices? The reasons people gave for not voting, and the relationship between late registration and racial militancy (p. above), may indicate that conscious alienation and frustration over the choices may be nearer the truth. If so, these findings have enormous implications for future political socialization and voter organization in the Negro community. Hopefully, further analysis can shed additional light on this question.

Some of the prominent fears that keep Negro voters away from the polls are the concerns that they might have troubles of one sort of another. In addition to the possibility of political and economic sanctions, some people are concerned that they may be awkward or seen as incompetent as they vote. We asked our respondents if they encountered any troubles during the voting procedures. We asked this question of the respondents who voted in any one of the elections, some 253 persons. About 20 per cent of the registered voters had trouble of one kind or another at one time or another. Over half of these problems turned out to be mechanical problems with either a malfunction of the machines, unworkable levers, or both. Another group of problems was generated by insufficient time inside the machine to look through the ballot, and another group of problems focused on the length of time one had to stand and wait, or inaccurate voter rolls. The variety of these problems are listed in Table 11. It is important to note that 30 per cent of the people who voted experienced no trouble at all with the voting machines or voting officials.

Table 11

Reason for Voting Difficulties

	Per Cent	
Did you have any trouble during the elections?		
No trouble	30%	
Some trouble	20%	
Trouble with machine		6%
Unworkable levers		5%
Not enough time		4%
Standing in line		3%
Name mispelled on list		2%

In addition to state and local voting behavior, we also inquired into our respondents' attitudes regarding some general issues concerning voting and election procedures. During this period, a Negro was elected sheriff of Macon County, Alabama. We asked our respondents how they felt about Macon County's election of a Negro sheriff, and 87 per cent of our sample said that they thought it was a good idea. We asked them why they thought so, and the reasons given are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Reasons for Election for Negro Sheriff

	Number	Per Cent
Why did you think it was a good idea for a Negro sheriff to be elected in Macon County?		
As qualified as anyone else	101	32.4
It's time for colored to win equal rights	102	32.8
Safeguard our people better	36	11.6
Show unity	18	5.9
Ought to be able to elect when we have more votes	7	2.2
Deal with problems of both races	7	2.2
No answer, don't know	41	13.1
	312	100.2

Essentially, the predominant responses were that it was time for a colored sheriff to win, particularly in a predominantly Negro county. Further, respondents stated that, if Negroes are concerned about attaining and maintaining equal rights, it is important for them to elect their own representatives. Another major group felt that, particularly in this case, the Negro candidate was as good as anyone else, and that merely on the basis of his qualifications, was an appropriate candidate for election. Some people thought it was not a good idea because "he'd probably get killed."

It was anticipated that a Negro sheriff in Alabama could have problems, and we asked respondents what they thought the sheriff's outstanding problems would be. The expectation that white people would not respect or obey him was a foremost issue (64.5 per cent). Second in importance was the concern that Negroes wouldn't respect or obey him either. The range and frequency of potential problems perceived by Montgomery respondents are presented in Table 13.

One of the concerns expressed by many social scientists and civil rights activists is that minority group voting may not be a very meaningful and satisfying process. In general, most of the respondents felt that voting did make a difference (73 per cent). The reasons they felt it make a difference primarily reflected a concern for the growth and unity of the Negro community, and in part a recognition of the strength and position of the Negro community. These reasons are listed in Table 14.

Table 13

Problems of a Negro Sheriff

	Per Cent
What problems will the Negro sheriff of Macon County have?	
Problems with whites	
Generally not obey or respect him	37.4
Difficulty in making arrests	27.1
Being shot at or killed	12.2
Problems with Negroes	
Generally not obey or respect	17.9
General problems	
Arresting criminals	1.9
Recruiting a staff	3.4

Table 14

Reasons for Negro Vote Participation

	Per Cent
Why did voting make a difference?	
Made Negro feel first class; gave Negroes a chance to speak out	32
Taught Negroes how to vote	25
Showed strength of Negro	16
Got some candidates elected	11
Got Negroes to cooperate and stick together	4
Candidates considered and respected Negro vote	12

The demonstration of the new power of the Negro community is obviously a very important part of voting for these respondents. Some people, however, felt that this power was only symbolic and didn't really count for anything. Most people who said that voting didn't make a difference felt that they were often afraid to go to the polls or were cheated and Negro votes weren't counted, that some Negroes split their votes and that Negroes were seldom able to make their weight felt--Flowers didn't win and Wallace won in spite of everything.

Finally, a number of recommendations for future action on the part of private Negro agencies and the federal government were proposed. The range of these suggestions is presented in Table 15. Some felt that voter registration campaigns should continue to be given high priority and that community organization efforts should try and get more voters registered. Others emphasized the need for federal protection and encouragement.

Table 15

Additional Measures for Negro Voter Participation

	Per Cent
What else should be done to help Negroes register and vote?	
Encourage more to register and vote	30
Get Negroes to stick together	21
Conduct voter registration schools	17
Enforce laws and protect voters	12
Better Negro candidates	7
Generally improve community	7
Negroes to help control votes	5

CHAPTER III

EDUCATIONAL ATTITUDES AND PERSPECTIVES

One of the most significant issues facing Southern Negroes is the means and processes by which their children become educated. Substantial documentation reveals the material and social distinctions between white schools and Negro schools, both ostensibly devoted to quality education for youngsters. With the passage of federal civil rights legislation in the past three years and the increasingly persuasive stance of the United States Office of Education, Negro parents and students in the South are for the first time able to choose the school students will attend.

In March 1966, federal health and education agencies issued new civil rights guidelines designed to curb racial segregation in hospitals and schools receiving aid funds from the government. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe II is reported by the Birmingham News as having said: "The guidelines marked the end of paper compliance with the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the beginning of enforcement based on southern school districts' actual performance in making equality of educational opportunity available."[1] The U. S. Office of Education insisted on desegregation plans for the fall of 1966 that would enable substantial

---

[1] Birmingham News, March 10, 1966, p. 9.

numbers of children to enter biracial schools. It was stipulated by USOE that school systems operating under various "freedom of choice" plans would have to demonstrate that the choices were free of coercion and that these plans had brought about at least a two-fold increase in desegregation. In commenting on such plans, Howe is reported as saying: "In many cases the freedom of choice concept has placed on the parent of child exercising the choice an undue burden to end discrimination when the burden should rest on school authorities."[1]

The free-choice system operating in Montgomery County and other parts of Alabama was ordered by a three-judge panel on March 11, 1966. Provisions of this plan for school desegregation, as outlined by the federal court, were:

-- A choice of schools may be exercised by the child's parents or guardians. A student may exercise his own choice if he is in the ninth grade or above or is 15 years old or older.

-- Each student is required to exercise a free choice of schools annually.

-- The period of choice will commence April 1 and end April 30 of the school year preceding the school year for which the choice is exercised.

-- On the date the choice period opens, an explanatory notice and a choice form will be sent home with each child.

---

[1] Ibid.

-- In assigning students to schools, no preference will be given to any student for prior attendance at a school and no choice will be denied for any reason other than overcrowding unless the matter is submitted to, and approved by, the federal court in Montgomery. In case of overcrowding at any school, preference will be given on the basis of the proximity of the school to the homes of the student choosing it without regard to race or color.
-- Buses will be routed to the maximum extent feasible so as to serve each student choosing any school in the system.

The press and public media have given considerable attention to state and local resistance to these programs by the white community. This report explores the reactions of portions of the Negro community to the problems of the free choice system or public school desegregation and pupil assignment. The sample of this study has been described above in Chapters I and II. For the purposes of the data reported in this chapter it is important to know that 127 respondents in the November reinterview, or 45 per cent of the total sample, were parents with children in school. The total number of students accounted for by these parents was 252. In the June survey, 161 out of 352 persons, or 44 per cent were parents of children in school.

Approximately 43 per cent of the children of the parents in the November sample were attending a Negro elementary school; 12 per cent were attending Negro junior high schools; and approximately 21 per cent, Negro high schools in Montgomery. Four students in this sample were enrolled in

white junior and senior high schools; that is, 1.6 per cent of all the students in the sample have attended desegregated public schools. There were also a sizable group of students (17 per cent) attending private and parochial schools, some of which are desegregated. These characteristics of the November sample are presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Distribution of Students in Schools

	Per Cent
Negro elementary	43.4
Negro junior high schools	12.2
Negro senior high schools	20.6
White public schools	1.6
Private schools	17.4

These characteristics of the sample make it quite impossible to understand very clearly the reasons Negro parents and/or students decided to enter desegregated public schools or the ways they adapted to such situations.[1] On the other hand, this sample may well permit us to discover some of the reasons Negro parents decided not to enroll their children in desegregated schools.

[1]In another study, conducted by Chesler, a substantial sample of Negro adolescents attending racially desegregated public schools across the State of Alabama have been interviewed. That study, replete with nondesegregated controls, should shed further light on the experience of public school desegregation.

General Attitudes Toward Education

It appears that Montgomery Negroes in our sample are concerned that their youngsters get adequate amounts of high quality education. Approximately 60 per cent of the parents felt that the least amount of education their children needed was a college degree. Almost all parents felt sure their children would get it.

To investigate views regarding the quality of schooling, respondents were asked whether they felt that students now were getting a better education or a worse education than the parents themselves had received. Over 35 per cent of the parents felt that students today were getting a better education. This education was seen as better primarily because teachers are better; books, equipment, and other facilities are better; and in general more attention is paid to schools. The relatively few parents who saw contemporary education as being worse felt that students had much less discipline now and were not as interested in school and schooling as their parents had been.

On the whole, it would seem that these Negro parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the current state of affairs and instruction in their schools. Ninety-six per cent of the parents expressed satisfaction with the character of schooling and the type of school their children attend. When asked to compare Negro schools with white schools, however, only 33 per cent of the sample felt that Negro schools were as good or better than white schools. Over 55 per cent of the sample felt that Negro schools were not as good as the white schools. But if 55 per cent of the sample felt that Negro schools were not as good as the white schools, why did 96 per cent of the parents still feel satisfied with the

quality of their children's schools? Does it mean that Negro parents accept the information that their own schools are inferior, yet are satisfied with such inferior schooling? Does it mean that they know their schools are inferior and are not satisfied with them, but when faced with the dangerous and difficult alternative of sending their youngsters to a white school they would rather rationalize than pioneer? The answers to these questions are simply not clear at the present; hopefully, further data collection and analysis both in this chapter and in the future, will shed light on the answer.

Informing Parents About the Opportunity for Desegregation

Large scale desegregation of schools in Montgomery, Alabama, became a possibility when federal courts ordered the local Board of Education to grant children and parents the right to choose which school they wanted to attend. Under the provisions of a free choice system, the local Board must notify parents of their options. One example of such notification is the following newspaper advertisement:

NOTICE

SION, YOU ARE NOTIFIED AS FOLLOWS: MARCH 22, 1966 OF THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF ALABAMA, NORTHERN DIVISION, YOUR ARE NOTIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

Grades 1 through 12 will be operated on a desegregated basis next year. Any student in these grades may choose to attend any school in the Montgomery County School System

regardless of the school's former racial designation. A choice must be made for each child who will be in grades 1 through 12 in September, 1967.

A choice form must be filled out on or before April 30, 1967. If a child is entering the ninth or higher grade, or if the child is fifteen years old or older, he may make the choice himself. This choice is controlling unless a different choice is exercised for him by the parent or other adult person serving as his parent during the choice period. Otherwise, a parent or other adult serving as a parent must sign the choice form.

No child will be denied his choice except for reasons of overcrowding. If a child's choice is denied for overcrowding, a second choice will be made available. If no choice can be granted, because of overcrowding, children nearest the school will be given preference.

All facilities, activities, and programs at the school chosen will be available to all students.

Transportation will be provided, if possible, no matter what school is chosen.

Choice forms may be returned by mail, in person, or by messenger to the school you are attending, or the school of your choice, or to the Superintendent's Office at 305 South Lawrence Street, Montgomery, Alabama, or P. O. Box 1991.[1]

---

[1] Montgomery Advertiser, March 23.

Approximately 90 per cent of the parents with children had heard about this possibility by mid-year. Most of the respondents heard about it from their children, who brought a notice from school, and others heard about it via television, radio, or newspaper. The variety and frequency of means by which parents became aware of the court order legitimizing free choice options for desegregating Montgomery schools are presented in Table 17.

Table 17

Sources of Information About Free Choice Options

Source	Per Cent
How did you hear about the court order desegregating Montgomery's public schools?	
School or PTA	6.5
My children	38.7
Television and radio	25.3
Newspapers	18.1
Friends and neighbors	5.1
Miscellaneous	5.3
	99.0

Almost 70 per cent of the parents reported that they eventually received a form from the school informing them of their children's rights to choose the school that they wanted to attend and asking for the name of their choice. It is not clear whether those parents who did not see

or receive such a form were bypassed because the school did not give out the form or because the child neglected to bring the form home. Of those parents who received the form, 35 per cent filled it out. Some parents did not fill out the form, and for the most part these parents did not want to change their child's school.

Attitudes Toward Desegregation

In order to understand some of the dynamics surrounding potential school desegregation, we asked respondents a number of questions about the transfer of their children to a mostly white school. In the February 1966 survey, 74 per cent of the parents said they would send some of their children to a white school, 20 per cent said they would not, and 6 per cent didn't know. However, only 53 per cent said they would send all of their children; the others felt some of their children should go but not others. Those that should go were, regardless of age, those that could "compete best" or "take care of themselves." In the November reinterview, 67 per cent of the parents said they might send their child to a white school; but only 51 per cent could say when they would do so. It appears that there is a consistent gap between the abstract support of school desegregation and the concrete and immediate decision to desegregate.

The concerns about desegregation were made more specific by the question: "Did you ever think of sending any of your children to mostly white schools? Why did you, or didn't you?" Twenty per cent of the parents had indeed considered the possibility of sending their child to a previously white school. Of this 20 per cent, a number decided not to

because their child didn't want to go to the white school; others considered that their children were too small and unable to protect themselves in a risky and potentially dangerous situation. Another group of parents felt that the white school was really too far away for their children to attend. But the great majority of the sample, 80 per cent, really have not considered seriously the possibility of sending their children to an all-white school.

The fact that the legal possibility of free choice exists, and that legal desegregation of the schools exists, does not make this free choice a matter of immediate concern and action to Negro parents. For many of them, public notification and a form from the Board of Education does not mean that they really feel they may make a choice about the kinds of schools their youngsters are to attend. They may well understand the difference between pro forma obedience to federal rules and any real interest or support for school desegregation by the Board of Education. Moreover, a free choice apparatus certainly does not mean that parents have the information about various schools with which to make such a crucial decision. Then, too, if 96 per cent of the parents are well satisfied with the schools that their youngsters are currently attending, there exists minimal motivation to change that school for a white school.

In further inquiry, most of the parents reported that they felt there might be some advantages to sending their children to a mostly white school. The largest proportion of parents felt that if their child were to make such a move, he or she would have a choice of a wider range of subjects and more and better facilities and books. Furthermore,

some felt that their youngster would get more attention from the teacher and would subsequently learn more. Table 18 reflects the variety and frequency of perceived advantages and disadvantages to desegregated schooling.

Table 18

Advantages and Disadvantages of Going to a White School

Advantages	(N=95) %	Disadvantages	(N=92) %
Children learn more	23	Adjust to new school	15
Wider subject choice	6	No white friends	18
Better facilities and equipment	23	Harm from whites	22
More attention from teachers	5	Transportation	8
White schools better; equal education	8	Don't know	37
Don't know	30		

It is clear that these parents saw major disadvantages to attendance at white schools. For the most part, parents were concerned about the problems of adjustment and their children's relationships to the white students in the white classroom. Some other parents were concerned about actual physical and mental harm,potential violence, teasing and name

calling,[1] that could come to their children.

With these data regarding the minimal amount of desegregation in Montgomery schools and the minimal amount of parental consideration of the possibility of desegregation, it was our concern to discover whether these parents would consider sending their children to a desegregated school in the future. Approximately 26 per cent of the parent population said they would send their child to a desegregated school at some time in the future. Of these parents who would send their children, 10 per cent thought that they would send them within the next year; another 35 per cent thought that they would send them when the children themselves wanted to go; and 25 per cent thought they would send the children at some future point when they would be old enough to fend for themselves. Almost a third of the parents who said that they would send their children could not be specific about when that would occur, thus minimizing our faith in their ability to act on their preference. Table 19 presents data regarding the timing of parents' intentions to send their children to desegregated schools.

It is interesting to note that when parents talked about why they had not yet sent their youngsters to a desegregated school, many parents consistently reported that a good part of the decision would be left up

---

[1]Chesler and Segal report that such incidents did indeed occur, and occurred especially frequently in this part of the state--64 per cent of the Negro youngsters attending desegregated schools experienced violence, name calling and substantial teasing from white students and an additional 31 per cent felt white students were indifferent, ignored them or otherwise made life difficult.

to their children.[1]

Table 19

Time When Parents Will Send Their Children to a Desegregated School

Time	Per Cent	
When would you send your children to a mostly white school?		
Will send:	51	
Next year		5
When older		12
When whites accept		5
When they decide		16
Don't know		13
Will not send	33	
Don't know	16	

It is clear that parents were not ignorant of the possibility of school desegregation in Montgomery. Eighty-eight per cent of the sample knew that there were some Negro children in this town who were attending

[1]Data collected by Chesler from high school desegregators strongly support the reality of this expectation. In over 30 per cent of the cases both parents supported a youngster's decision, but the decision itself was most often made by the student himself or herself.

white schools. It is not clear, however, whether they knew these youngsters or the parents of these youngsters personally. Moreover, when we inquired into general feelings about the advisability of school desegregation, approximately 71 per cent of the Negro parents thought that Negroes should go to school with whites; only 16 per cent thought that they should stay in their own schools. Minimal evidence of concrete attempts and planning for desegregation do not mean, therefore, that there is a powerful moral norm against racial desegregation within the Negro community. Instead, it may be that to a population which has largely been denied access to, and participation in, the decision-making process, choice is not yet a reality. This unreality may account for the relatively apathetic response to the possibility of their children entering white schools. It may well be that racial desegregation of the schools happens most readily in those communities where Negro and/or white leadership was exercised to organize parents to support one another and send their youngsters to a predominantly white school. The smaller the number of parents and students taking these risks, the harder it becomes for anyone to go. The more community organizing, doorbell ringing, postcard mailing and meetings, the more support, encouragement, and risk-taking is likely to be present for school transfers.

Some General Results

At this point in our data analysis we have been able to make very few cross runs between these educational variables and the political variables reported in Chapter II. Further analysis is planned to examine

E N D

DEPT. OF HEALTH

EDUCATION AND

WELFARE

U.S. OFFICE OF

EDUCATION

E R I C

DATE FILMED

11-22-68